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### **All Day Kindergarten Benefits**

All day kindergarten has been an ongoing debate throughout the state of Montana and across the country. Arguments for full-day kindergarten include: 1) all kindergarten- aged students need an enriching environment and safe environment for more than 2 hours per day. 2) Students who are delayed either physically, cognitively, socially, or emotionally benefit from having more time to work on skills or obtain support in the areas of delay. 3) All day kindergarten can help equalize the playing field for those students who were not afforded quality pre-school experiences. 4) Teachers can differentiate instruction and focus on individualized instruction more often if they are given twice as much time. 5) Our communities need its children to acquire important competencies earlier in their school careers.

### **Facts to Think About:**

- There are significant improvements in cognitive and physical maturity for those children who attend full day kindergarten.
- Full day kindergarten students show greater achievement than children who attend part-time kindergarten.
- Students who attend all day kindergarten are more likely to show adequate progress throughout their elementary school careers.
- Full day kindergarten students show more independent learning, classroom participation, and productive work time with their peers, and the ability to reflect on their work than their half day peers.
- All day kindergarten students are also more likely to approach the teacher, express less withdrawal, anger, shyness, and blaming behavior than their part-time peers.
- Full day kindergarten allows children and teachers time to explore topics at a deeper level, reduces the transition time to class time, allows for greater consistency of day to day activities and provides an environment that is focused a child-centered, developmentally appropriate approach.

### **Effective Full Day Programs:**

- Effective programs integrate new learning with past experiences through projects, mixed ability and mixed age grouping in an unhurried setting
- Allows children to have a firsthand experience and informal interaction with objects, other children and adults.
- Effective programs work with parents to show information about their children, build a framework for the understanding of parent and teacher roles, emphasize reading to children in school and at home, and set the stage for parent-teacher partnerships in the future.
- Offer a balance of small group, large group, and individual activities.
- Develop children's social skills, including ways to resolve conflict.
- Morning activities may not be repeated in the afternoon session, but more time is devoted to social and enrichment activities in the afternoon.
- Children spend more time in small groups and child-to-child social interactions, and spend less time in teacher-directed groups.
- More time is spent helping children complete challenging tasks, develop friendships, and understand different points of view.
- The focus is on experiential learning and higher order thinking, child and teacher initiated activities are balanced, and the importance of play is recognized.
- Effective programs place an emphasis on language development and appropriate pre-literacy experiences.

### **Full Day Benefits for Teachers, Children, and Families:**

- Participating in full day kindergarten makes the transitions to first grade easier.
- Having more time during the school day allows for more flexibility and more time to do free choice items.
- Having more time makes kindergarten less stressful and frustrating for children because they have time to develop interests and activities more in depth.
- Attending full day programs allows for more appropriate challenges for children at all developmental levels. For example, children who are at-risk are allowed more time to complete projects and more time for socialization with peers and teachers. Children who are more advanced are able to complete projects at a deeper and more meaningful level.

- Full day kindergarten causes less stress and less pressure and children develop faster academically.
- Allows teachers more time for curriculum planning, incorporating a larger number of thematic units throughout the school year and more in- depth coverage of each unit.

**References:**

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